

Thinking Backwards. Stitching the Breach of Time, Reclaiming Uncertainty

My argument today is that we cannot meaningfully talk about anticipation or futures without first reassessing how we understand uncertainty.

'Futures' for me speaks to the challenge of moving into unknown tomorrows without imposing today's (or yesterday) script of what those futures should be.

When we talk about futures what we really talk about is the uncertain – no matter how much planning, forecasting, anticipating we do.

To start from uncertainty becomes especially urgent under the contemporary regime of algorithmic governmentality where predictive systems increasingly organize life by capturing potential and funnelling openness into probabilistic trajectories, ultimately eroding uncertainty. This is why for me uncertainty is the battleground of today – not something to manage or smooth away, but a vital resource for resistance. To rethink what uncertainty is, how we conceptualize it and experience it becomes a way not only of reimagining our relationship with machines, but to reclaim an otherwise of lived time experience.

So today I will speak about the uncertain flow of time, about the predictive machines and systems that capture it, about habits of thought that make us misunderstand time and the realm of the possible, and about how those habits might be dismantled if we want to reclaim a richer and more uncertain sense of time.

And perhaps surprisingly for an audience concerned with futures, I will do this not by looking forward, but by looking back— to a philosopher who was writing at the beginning of the twentieth century: Henri Bergson.

My talk is divided in two parts:

The first part introduces uncertainty and algorithmic governmentality, while the second will present a few ideas drawn on Bergson, to discuss time, possibility, his concept of attention.

My argument throughout, which is also a wager, which I discuss at length in my book, is that to build an alternative to algorithmic governmentality and to resist its power manoeuvres an *allyship with uncertainty is not only possible but necessary*. This is what the *power of maybes* stands for: an endorsement to live with uncertainty, to inhabit uncertainty, cultivating modes of knowing and being and resisting that hold uncertainty at their core.

We live in an age of paradox.

On one hand we feel that we live in unprecedentedly uncertain times, although as I will show this has to do more with the perception of risk than with uncertainty itself.

On the other, we are immersed in the hyper-certainty of algorithmic systems pre-empting human decision-making – *Planetary computation* - the “most radical process of artificialization of intelligence that human history has ever seen” as Luciana Parisi has written.

What counts as knowledge has been reconfigured by intelligent machines of prediction. The automation of decision-making has become a mode of governance based on the notion that data are neutral, computation is objective and that their computed outcomes coincide with the reality.

Tiziana Terranova calls it Corporate Platform Complex – “the privately owned worldwide infrastructure that has brought together technologies of communication and computation, connection and calculation in unprecedented ways”

The operations of the Corporate Platform Complex are designed to be *extractive* (as they extract value from human and nonhuman resources, attention, labour, sleep-time, eyeballs, life itself), *predatory* (as they are driven by stakeholder capitalism’s imperative to grow profit) and *pathogenic* (as their by-product is endemic malaise).

The result is that with the stimulus/ reward mechanism in full operation that monetizes every aspect of our lived experience, uncertainty is constrained into predictable grooves that capture my potential, pre-empt my behaviours, foreclose my futures.

As uncertainty gets seized, ambiguity is eroded, existence is impoverished.

But what is uncertainty? How do you relate to uncertainty?

Probably with mix of anxiety and curiosity, apprehension and logic, fatalism and anger, but perhaps, and that’s where things get interesting, with longing, desire, wonder, willingness to be surprised. Think about the words, images and metaphors you are drawn to when you think about uncertainty. Matters of language are not secondary. The images I use to think with create worlds. They are the figurations that scaffold my reality.

I hear uncertainty described as void, lack, (of information, knowledge, certainties); as ‘blindness’, ‘obstructed vision’ or as ‘fog’ or ‘blur’ or a ‘black hole’.

These expressions signal the lack of something (not enough knowledge or information), but also powerlessness (inability to decide, to make a move, to choose) or apprehension (anxiety, fear, paralysis).

And that’s why uncertainty has a bad reputation. It is something to be wary of, to wish away, to manage and contain. It is synonym with everything that makes life unstable and precarious – events and contingencies beyond our control.

Yes, uncertainty is all these things, but not only and my book is certainly not a manual on how to tame, reduce uncertainty. On the contrary it’s about reclaiming the richer facets of uncertainty that are there too, lurking.

In its simplest terms uncertainty has to do with not knowing, when I don’t know what might or might not happen - So, it can be defined as the by-product of imperfect information, when information is incomplete and asymmetrical, when I don’t know whether something is true or false and when I know that I don’t know enough. This is *epistemic uncertainty*; it has to do with the limits of my knowledge, which can be measured, and is subjective.

Uncertainty around the predictability of outcomes is called *aleatory* or statistical (e.g. when I toss a coin). However, all uncertainty has an irreducible element of subjectivity, and eventually any difference between aleatory and subjective uncertainty tends to dissipate.

Then *ontological* uncertainty is about things that are indeterminate in themselves, and concern states and changes of state that are said to be independent from an external observer.

The key distinction is between *epistemic* uncertainty - when I do not know about something - and *ontological* uncertainty - when variability is inherent to a given system – also *indeterminacy*. however, even the question of whether uncertainty is epistemic or ontological whether it is more about what I do not know, or about something that is inherently unknowable, eventually loses traction. The indeterminate and the indeterminable are not mutually exclusive. What matters is not how they differ, but how they connect

Other adjacent terms are

- *vagueness* when the exact meaning of something cannot be determined and it is not possible to distinguish between the unknowable and the unknown.
- *ambiguity* when more than one meaning can be assigned to something, resulting in competing meanings

One way of responding to uncertainty is by framing it as a *risk*. This is the approach found in social sciences, economics, statistics and the insurance sector.

Risk is the general term for unwanted and negatively perceived events (e.g. loss, damage, threat), and for the calculation of the probability of said unwanted events.

Risk expresses the present calculation of a future uncertainty. It indicates in mathematical terms the statistical probability and the costing of the worst possible outcome.

But no matter how objective and scientific and accurate the assessment of a given situation is, it will always be informed by what in that given context – social, cultural, financial, economic, legal etc — is *perceived* as risk.

There is no risk assessment (and therefore no risk per se) without context.

Sociologist Gerda Reith puts it bluntly and very well when she says that “there is no such thing as risk in the world, only dangers we construct in our head”.

In other words, risk is not an intrinsic property of things, or an autonomous entity, it is always a contextual one. So, it is more correct to say that risk is a ‘cognitive frame’, rather than a real (or quasi-real) phenomenon that I experience directly.

Now, what matters here is the extent to which the quantification of a future contingency (my perception of risk) becomes a guide for present anticipatory action.

How I perceive risk reveals how I see my future; therefore, it shapes my present too.

So, what can we learn from these initial considerations?

First of all, that risk and uncertainty are not the same thing.

Uncertainty cannot be measured, calculated nor insured. Risk can.

If risk is the eventuality that something bad might happen, what I experience is not risk per se but my knowledge of its (contextually constructed) calculation.

Risk has to do with *knowing* (how much or little), not with *being*. Risk is epistemic, not ontological.

This leads to the familiar paradox that the more information and knowledge we have, the more uncertainty seems to grow. And this is the situation we inhabit now, high perception of uncertainty while algorithmic systems pre-empt human decision-making – algorithmic governmentality.

Algorithmic governmentality is the regime of automated reason that relies on calculating machines of prediction to foreclose futures.

It is the statistical governance of the 'real' that feeds on the potential dimensions of human existence and whose anticipatory mode of interfacing with the world replaces causality and erode uncertainty.

Perhaps it is useful at this point to explain this word I have been using: *governmentality*

When we use the word 'governmentality' we go straight to Foucault - who coined this term in the late 1970s by combining 'government' and 'rationality'

Government is "the right disposition of things, arranged so as to lead to a convenient end" with 'things' referring to both human and nonhuman.

Therefore, governmentality concerns all the tactics deployed to manage people and things through rational techniques and systems of classification.

Governmentality is "intimately bound up" with calculation and statistics, and it is indeed the advent of statistics as a science that paved the way for today's algorithmic governmentality.

What makes this regime so unique is not only that calculation is at its very core, but that, for the first time in history, calculation has become fully *automated*.

We know how this works.

Algorithmic governmentality designs my tendencies for living, being and existing.

It deploys the automation of automation to hijack my propensities before they become manifest. Its new-normal rationality turns contingency (what may be) into discrete chunks of controlled experiences (what will be).

My lived experience is captured. The time dedicated to decision-making, reflection, pause, hesitancy, ambiguity – *maybes* – tends to dissipate. What I *may* or not do, what I may or not be – my potential – becomes instead what I *will* do, what I *will* be now given as the only possible mode of actualization.

The computational re-distribution of my sensibilities and affects happens not simply *before* I register these mechanisms at a conscious level, but *below* the threshold of my human sentience. The flow of potential I am traversed by is captured and siphoned a micro-instant *before* I have made a decision as to how to channel it.

Once captured, the potential becomes the only given 'possible possible'.

It becomes the only present clamping down on the open-endedness of futures. I no longer am the sum of all the potential that makes me into a not-fully-predictable horizon of possibilities, both taken and non-taken. Instead, I have become a selected quantification of that potential, available for capture, my vital uncertainty eroded to the bone.

Again, this is nothing new.

Already in the late 1970s, French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard in this great small book *The Postmodern Condition. A Report on Knowledge*, published in 1979, had already identified in the new unit of information (*bit*) and in the translation of information into code the fundamental issue whose full-blown impact is what we are experiencing now: the erosion of ambiguity.

Lyotard's reflection on the impact of computation on knowledge are incredibly actual, and his predictions have become reality. How knowledge is produced and acquired has changed. The point is not simply that knowledge has become a tradeable asset, or that it is instrumentalized, commodified, monetized – this is nothing new. What is new is the extent to which knowledge has become subsumed in algorithmic governmentality and the extent to which what counts as knowledge has been automated.

On this ground I ask:

What if the philosopher most relevant to the age of automation and predictive analytics was not a contemporary theorist of AI, but a thinker writing at the beginning of the twentieth century — indeed, the most celebrated philosopher of his age? A philosopher who then fell into decades of relative obscurity until Gilles Deleuze helped heralding his return in 1966.

I am talking of course of Henri Bergson

Bergson is the most profound thinker of time, his ideas are original and provocative and extraordinarily actual.

But there is another important reason why I offer you Bergson: because all his work is concerned with understanding “the continuous creation of unforeseeable novelty” – which is something philosophy continues to struggle with, in fact not only philosophy but the human intellect.

There is a particular aspect of his work I will focus on in this second part of my talk, a lecture he gave on the 24 September 1920 at the Congress of Philosophy held at Oxford University.

It was one of the first international philosophical congresses after the devastation of the First World War, and German philosophers remained excluded. The historical moment matters. It is 1920, after a war that Europe's political and intellectual systems had failed to foresee — a catastrophe that shattered nineteenth-century confidence in progress, and rational prediction.

Bergson, who was then the most famous philosopher in Europe, and perhaps in the world, delivered the opening lecture of the congress, the title of his talk was

La Prévision et la Nouveauté “Prediction and Novelty.”

History would later remember it under a different name, *The Possible and the Real*.

Bergson was famously meticulous. He often spent years refining formulations before publishing them. The lecture itself remained unpublished for a decade. It first appeared in 1930 Swedish journal as part of the address connected to the Nobel Prize in Literature, he had received in 1927. It was finally republished in French in *The Creative Mind* in 1934.

Bergson was not only a philosopher, he also played a significant role in the reconstruction of international intellectual life after the War. In 1922, he became the founding president of the League of Nations' International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC), the direct precursor to UNESCO. Conceived as a vehicle for peace through intellectual exchange, the committee brought together figures such as Albert Einstein and Marie Curie and other scientists, artists, and scholars to foster collaboration among cross national borders. He had already served a diplomatic role during the war. In 1917, the French government sent him to the United States to meet President Wilson and advocate for the Allied cause and the internationalist ideals that would later inform the League of Nations.

In that lecture, Bergson advances a number of provocative ideas:

- that the “possible” does not pre-exist the real
- that is the real which creates its own possibility retroactively
- that the future cannot truly be predicted because genuine novelty emerges in time
- that no political, scientific, or logical system, no calculation can fully pre-contain the future, because the future is not already there waiting to be discovered. It is created.

In *The Possible and the Real* Bergson argues that not only is the future open, but it is also radically unforeseeable. This means that reality is not about charting a path through a multitude of options that get selected one after the other as if in sequence.

Reality unfurls in all its ‘sinuosities’ that cannot be calculated

But this is not how we usually think.

Bergson is surgically precise in analysing the limitations of human intellect and the ingrained habits of thought that prevent us from grasping this unfurling, this openness and this uncertainty.

So, before we proceed any further into the possible and the real I will first explain what Bergson means by habits of thought which for him derive from badly presented problems.

As humans we are driven by basic needs, usually defined by lack. We project. We anthropomorphize. We impose symbolic diagrams upon the movement of the real to make it uniform, regular, and calculable, graspable.

Our mind seeks for solid points of support, it substitutes the continuous with the discontinuous, movement with stability, tendencies and propensities with fixed points.

Of course, we do this to cope with the complexity of our lived experience, which is made of a plethora of rhythms and patterns of time — biological, psychological, social time — interacting with each other, we break this complexity into segments to manage it, to obtain functional yes-and-no answers. And this is ok and useful because is entirely necessary to practical life but in doing so we reduce the real to diagrams, often binary.

For example, take the situation in which we feel we are facing an alternative between two options

We may picture ourselves travelling along a path, reaching the point where we encounter the branching, where choice is located, and where we are called to decide between our two options.

But Bergson tells us that to even to postulate a bifurcation between options is a distorted view of time.

Because this diagram is a crude crystallization of something flowing. It emphasizes two options (A and B) as destinations, giving them equal status but cannot show the sinuosities of the real.

The diagram is a fictional simplification that transforms movement and tendencies into inert states that we posit as if they were awaiting our choice, as if we could choose A while B stays unchanging waiting for us, and if we could in principle change our mind and retrace our steps.

But this is not true. Those destinations (A and B) are not real. What is real are the tendencies toward them, movements to which however we assign stability for convenience.

Bergson even writes, “in reality there are not two tendencies, nor even two directions, but just a self which lives and develops through its own hesitations, until free action drops off like an overripe fruit”.

This is not about a choice between pre-given options but a ripening of action in time

Which fits with my critique of predictive systems: the future is not the selection of an option from a menu of possibilities; it is the maturation of a process whose outcome cannot be fully specified in advance.

But why do we keep on falling into these habits of thoughts?

Because “the intellect is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life” which is a striking remark.

Our intellect struggles to comprehend movement, and instead gravitates towards immobility, it builds the idea of movement by putting static things together, it fabricates reality by carving matter, it uses ready-made concepts as if they were a net with which to catch a discrete portion of the reality which passes through.

But this is not how the cosmos works.

What are most ingrained and persistent habits of thought?

1. the habit of turning time into space, continuity into measurable quantities
2. the habit of thinking about *change* as something happening to static objects. But things are not static, we see them as discrete and self-contained but they keep on flowing into each other through indiscernible transitions – we may call them objects, atoms or bits, but they are fugitive emanations.
3. most important for my discussion - and with this I will return to the possible and the real- the habit of thinking of the possible as something less than the 'real' as if the possible is that to which reality gets added.

But this is an illusion in the same way in which we think about *nothing* as the absence of something, *chaos* as the lack of order, when actually

- nothing is something, simply irrelevant our purpose
- chaos is a kind of order we call 'disorder' because it is not the order we want
- the possible is prevented from being real by something else which is real in its place.

it's these habits that create a **breach** into the sinuous fabric of time.

The mechanism works like this:

1. Something happens — a work of art, a life event.
2. Once it exists, we look back and say: “Ah yes, it was possible all along.”
3. We then imagine that this possibility somehow pre-existed the event itself.

We are locked into the idea that possibility comes before what is real, and that without the possible there would be no real. The implications of this is that we think of the future as the domain of the realization of the possible.

But possibilities do not precede their realization says Bergson.

Because this would mean to postulate a metaphysics in which everything is given already as if future possibilities were stored in a **cabinet of possibles** from which our choices are made, and the future is nothing but a combination of what exists already.

For Bergson, this falsifies novelty. Because if the future were already composed of ready-made possibilities, then nothing new could emerge.

Only after the Mona Lisa was painted, or Hamlet written the possibility of these artworks happening can be contemplated.

No possibility of Mona Lisa or Hamlet existed until they appeared. Once created, we imagine that they were always possible, even though that very possibility was unimaginable until the thing happened.

What we call “possibility” is a shadow cast by the present over the past.

This is because when we think about what is possible, we always conceive it from the vantage point of our present looking at the past: as a result of what has happened, the past has changed, containing now a logical possibility that it did not before.

Bergson quotation: “As reality is created as something unforeseeable and new, its image is reflected behind it into the indefinite past; thus it finds that it has from all time been possible, but it is at this precise moment that it **begins** to have been always possible.

The possible is therefore the mirage of the present in the past (...).

That is precisely the illusion. It is as if, in seeing your reflection in the mirror, you figured that you could have touched it had you remained on the other side.”

This is an illusion produced by the intellect, a ‘mirage’

Deleuze calls this a sleight of hand.

Bergson calls it “a constant remodelling of the past by the present, of the cause by the effect” because we are prey of an illusion,

Why I insist so much on this short paper by Bergson?

The important thing here is that when something happens, we know for a fact that it was possible for that thing to occur, but that doesn’t equate to knowing what might possibly occur in the future.

Bergson quotation: “If you close the gate, you know no one will cross the road; it does not follow that you can predict who will cross when you open it”

But I also insist on this because for me the analysis he proposes in *The possible and the real* is fundamental for a radical rethinking of what futures can be. Because this mirage, this illusion he describes of positing the possible as what precedes reality, as what anticipates futures, is nothing but the reduction to calculability of the unpredictability of the real.

This reduction has accelerated enormously since Bergson wrote, effectively curtailing our capacity of thinking “the continuous creation of unforeseeable novelty”, of thinking futures unbound to the present, of thinking divergence.

Now, if we begin to accept Bergson’s critique of the possible and the real, and our habits of thought, it is also about accepting his conception of time.

Bergson's radical proposition is that time is not an abstract entity but is the concrete experience of our inner life. It is a force that cannot be transposed into mathematical terms; because when we measure it we effectively turn time into space. and in fact we live as if time were space even though it is not.

He calls this 'duration'- the continuous, indivisible, subjective experience of time as a living thing. To think in duration is to think in movement, is to let go of discrete points. One example that Bergson offers is when we listen to a melody where each note or musical phrase flows into the next.

Elizabeth Grosz captures this well when she writes that duration is the "survival of a previous state in a successive one", the ceaseless movement of states through indiscernible transitions.

We experience duration every time we wait.

Bergson uses the example of waiting for sugar to dissolve in water. This waiting is duration which also expresses the lack of alignment between my desire for a sweet drink and matter's own duration in this case sugar and water whose rhythms simply do not coincide with mine. Sugar's own being is defined by its own duration, by a certain manner of persisting, enduring, relaxing or contracting

There are some important considerations to be made here

1. Duration takes time. I must endure it before I get what I want or what I seek. In other words, not everything is given at once. Time takes time.
2. Duration means to endure to continue, which means continually changing. Each moment will be different from the moment before, and at the core of this process is the uncertain leap into divergence

Bergson quotation: "The living being essentially has duration; it has duration precisely because it is continuously elaborating what is new and because there is no elaboration without searching, no searching without groping. Time is this very hesitation, or it is nothing."

Again, what Bergson insists on is that

1. Lived time as duration is about change, and the creation of the new, a *divergence* between what was and what will be. Everything proceeds by divergence – not just by growing acquisition or linear accumulation. Here divergence describes precisely that which constantly differs from itself. The impetus of life, what Bergson called *élan vital*, is the force of emergence.
2. Second, this process is tentative, is a *groping*, a hesitation, a maybe, is about being always in the middle of an unfurling, of a tendency which possesses its own energy, its own vitality.

Now how can we use these considerations for our understanding of the future?

Bergson's perspective makes the future legible not as progression, but as what endures, diverges and transforms itself constantly.

But this complicates highly our reading of the future, because it asks us to shift from trying to understand, predict or anticipate, to grasp change and not in terms of what we know already, but in the uncomfortable, difficult, challenging terms of what we don't know yet.

Which takes us back to uncertainty, and to how we choose to conceptualise it.

If I keep on insisting on the unforeseen, the unplanned and the uncertain, it is not out of a naïve disposition towards surprise and novelty, or as an endorsement to ‘embrace or celebrate’ uncertainty for its own sake or as a creativity trigger.

It is because of a commitment to the possibility that something genuinely new may emerge—something that exceeds the horizons of the present and cannot be reduced to its probabilities, projections, or existing conditions.

But to do this we must dislodge those habits of thought that reduce becoming to prediction and the future to an extension of the present

To reflect on this, we must again consider the historical moment in which Bergson was writing

A great deal of his work was a response to what was happening at the time: what theorist Jonathan Crary calls “the general standardization of experience and automation of perceptual response at the turn of the century”

This was the time – roughly from the 1890s until the 1930s – of the rapid emergence of new technologies: cinema, wireless telegraphy, electrification, assembly-line, radio, television, advertising — all technologies that generated new forms of automatic perception, scripted behaviours and in which pre-made images were consumed passively. This was also the time of the emergence of social and industrial spaces increasingly saturated with sensory input — the street, the arcade, the department store, all key markers of urban modernity, fostering new forms of spectacular consumption.

In parallel, a central problem in mainstream psychology was the nature of attention, problems of concentration, focus, distraction, the relation between stimulus and attention.

The sensorial saturation driven by new technologies prompted the very actual question,

How many sources of stimulation could one attend simultaneously?

Bergson reflected on the impact of this intensified sensorium making behaviour increasingly routinized, and making thoughts and decision-making processes increasingly automated.

He considered this a *reduction* – a reduction of life to automatisms, ready-made responses, sensorimotor reflexes, a reduction of life to mechanical reaction.

For him this is the intrusion of “the mechanical”, a term which designates not technology per se, but the erosion of complexity, the erosion of indeterminacy, the erosion of continuity.

Most of us exist as automatons, he writes, acting out of inertia and the pressure of social conventions. Our habits of thoughts and social habits prevent us from having an immediate contact with life.

Against this he has a proposition, a way to interrupt the intrusion of the mechanical, to reopen duration, to bring back hesitation and with it the possibility that something new might emerge

He calls this attention –attention to life

Attention is about being in contact with reality, taking each situation as it is, not as a function of some overarching utility or instrumental logic.

It is attention that makes us perceive continuity.

If outward attention allows us to perceive people and events in their singularity; inward attention is about reclaiming the subtle inner motions, and emotions, and durations that compose our psychic life.

But this not passive contemplation nor detached introspection, it is an active adjustment to reality, a deep tuning into reality, a living relation between perception and becoming that allows us to grasp the coexistence of multiple durations, their simultaneity.

What is interesting here is how strongly this reverberates with contemporary concerns around attention – attention studies - but with a difference: for Bergson attention is not just concentration or cognitive focus, is not about the allocation of a finite resource, is not about its scarcity, certainly, it is not about ‘paying’ attention

Instead it is about grasping the coexistence of multiple durations through which we can enter indeterminacy, which Bergson equates with freedom. Indeed, for Bergson ‘attention to life’ is the pre-eminent human capability, a mode of openness to reality that expand our relation to the world and resist its narrowing.

So, while automatic behaviours and habits of thoughts contract and reduce life, a reduction, attention is its expansion.

When attention loosens, we drift into mechanical behaviour.

But when attention intensifies, tenses, life becomes richer, more open, more inventive — capable of perceiving novelty rather than merely reproducing the known.

It is this elasticity, this intensification we want to *cultivate*.

And Bergson tells us how to do that

and that is by *thinking backwards*, which is how we stitch the breach of time, and reclaim uncertainty

Bergson quotation: “The mind has to do violence to itself, has to reverse the direction of the operation by which it habitually thinks, has perpetually to revise, or rather to recast, all its categories. But in this way, it will attain to fluid concepts, capable of flowing reality in all its sinuosities and of adopting the very movement of the inward life of things.”

It is attention that allows us to think backwards, because it allows memory to create our present anew, diverging from established grooves and instead of keeping on confirming known perception, it remakes perception, opening up new pathways.

This is how we begin to conceive futures not already contained in the present, not pre-empted by it, futures not known, but to be made, that erupt from the present, leaping out of it

Elizabeth Grosz tells us that this eruption, this leap is what radical politics of resistance are made of, a leap into the unknown that is a transformation of the ingrained dynamics of the present, and renders the existing order unstable, insecure, and ultimately replaceable.

but this can happen only if the present not simply critiqued, but c gets dislocated, cracked, fractured because it is only in this way that the new can be invented, welcomed, and affirmed.

This is what Bergson can teach us - thinking backwards to stitch the breach of time and reclaim the uncertainty we need as an ally to live in time, to make futures different from the endless replication of the present.

Today, in an age of algorithmic governmentality, the future is treated as something that can be modelled and optimized. Algorithms systems operate through the metaphysical assumption that the future already exists in latent form as a field of calculable possibilities waiting to be extracted – the cabinet of possibilities. These systems spatialize time. They transform living processes into measurable units: metrics, dashboards, probabilities, scores. Duration becomes data.

This is precisely the logic Bergson critiques in *The Possible and the Real*. Because lived experience is not discrete. It is durational: rhythms, affects, memories, hesitations, transformations, **maybes**

Bergson gives us a philosophical vocabulary for resisting the reduction of life to calculability and capture, at a time when the conditions of planetary computation are reactivating and magnifying questions that industrial modernity was already asking.

He reminds us that the future is not a menu of options to choose from but an open process of emergence and divergence.

This where an allyship with uncertainty becomes urgent and necessary, not only as a resistance to ontological closure, but as one of the most urgent philosophical and political tasks available to us.

The possible does not precede the real. The possible is not the blueprint of reality.

Time is not the unfolding of what already exists or we know.

Time is not its models, its diagrams or metaphors.

Time invents.

Time is real.

Time hides within objects.

Time takes time.

Thank you